

VARIABLE POSITION ENDOTRACHEAL TUBE HOLDER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to medical equipment and particularly to a variable position endotracheal tube holder.

During various medical procedures and conditions, a tube may be inserted through the mouth, and into the trachea of a patient. The purpose of such intubation may be to ensure proper ventilation, to administer medication, or for other reasons. Similarly, tubes may be placed into the esophagus, or into the nose. In any case, where the patient is to remain intubated for a period of time, it is common to anchor the tube with a clamping fixture worn on the head or adhered to the face of the patient. It is often important that the tube be movable laterally within the mouth, for example when other devices or tubes have to be placed in the mouth, or to enable a practitioner to view the throat. Periodic tube movement, for example every eight hours, is a requirement during long-term intubation.

A number of prior inventors have provided endotracheal tube holders which permit lateral movement of the tube, with respect to a fixed face plate. Some known devices, however, have a disadvantage of covering the mouth, essentially. See, for example, U.S. Pat. No. 4,223,671, which allows for lateral movement of the tube. Plates which block the mouth limit viewing of the mouth and throat by medical personnel.

Another disadvantage of many prior devices is their difficulty of installation. It would be better to have a tube holder whose components could be easily snapped together, when needed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the invention is to anchor an endotracheal tube within the mouth opening, without actually blocking the opening.

Another object of the invention is improve oral access.

A further object is to facilitate lateral tube movement by medical personnel, while positively preventing unintended movement.

A related object is to prevent oral injury to an intubated patient.

These and other objects are attained by a variable position endotracheal tube holder including a face piece having an arcuate transverse portion adapted to pass between the nose and upper lip of the patient and a pair of downwardly extending wings at either end of the transverse portion. The wings have slots for receiving harness straps that pass around the head to secure the face piece. The lateral portion of the face piece has upper and lower flanges protruding away from the patient's face, and defining a way which receives and retains a movable support for holding the endotracheal tube.

"Way", is used herein in the mechanical engineering sense, to mean a groove in a fixed part defining a path along which another component can slide.

The support includes an arcuate slider that can slide in the way of the face piece. Two downwardly-biased barbed feet engage detents in the bottom of the groove to hold the slider in a chosen position. Broad tabs extend forward from the feet so that the barbs can be manually released. Protruding from the front of the slider is a

hanger bracket having a short horizontal upper leg, a long vertical lower leg, and a tube engaging member at the bottom of the lower leg. The tube engaging member has a concave lower surface, to conform to the shape of the tube. In a preferred embodiment, the tube engaging member has a portion extending into the mouth, to act as a bite block, while in another embodiment, the tube engaging surface is an obliquely extending element useful for holding a nasal cannula.

An advantage of the invention is that the face plate can be applied in a code situation; later, if need be, a tube can be easily inserted through the face plate.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings,

FIG. 1 is a rear elevation of a variable position endotracheal tube holder embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a top view thereof;

FIG. 3 is a front elevation thereof;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken on the vertical plane of symmetry 4-4 in FIG. 2,

FIG. 5 is a view, like FIG. 4, showing a first modified form of the invention, and

FIG. 6 is a view, also like FIG. 4, of a second modified form of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As shown in FIGS. 1-3, a variable position endotracheal tube holder embodying the invention includes a face piece 10 having an arcuate laterally extending main portion 12 adapted to pass between the nose and upper lip of the patient, and a pair of downwardly extending wings 14,16 at either end of the transverse portion. The wings have slots 18 for receiving harness straps (not shown) that pass around the head to secure the face piece. The harness may be provided with a placard for posting of medical information such as date of intubation, tube size, tube depth, etc.

The main portion 12 of the face piece has a pair of spaced flanges 20,22 protruding away from the patient's face, and defining a way 24 which receives and retains a movable support for holding the endotracheal tube. The flanges have respective lips 26,28 facing one another. Each has a forwardly facing beveled edge, which allows a slide member described below to be pushed into the way from the front. The lower lip is castellated, having intermittent portions removed, leaving gaps 30.

The support 32 includes an arcuate slider 34 that is inserted into the way 24, and can slide lengthwise in it. The rear vertical surfaces of the lips 26,28 retain the slider. The lower portion of the slide comprises two downwardly-biased splayed feet 38,40, each being longer than the gaps, so it is always retained in the way by the lower lip, regardless of the slider's lateral position. The free height of the slider is somewhat greater than that of the way, so that the feet are bent slightly during deformation. A spring force results. The outer ends of the feet are downwardly facing triangular barbs 42, that engage within detents or holes 44 in the bottom edge of the way to hold the slider in a chosen position. The outer edge of each barb is an oblique surface. Broad tabs 46 extend forward from the feet so that the barbs can be manually released by first lifting the tabs, to overcome the spring force normally keeping the barbs seated in the detents.